

## June 2022 News

### A Fond Farewell and Inspiring Reflection



On June 24th, we bid farewell to our amazing and much-loved Program Coordinator for Community Engagement, **Jackie Kasinskas**, who is headed off to grad school in the fall. For the past 2 years, Jackie provided immeasurable support and leadership for the Community Engagement team, after having completed her service as a LISC AmeriCorps member. You can read Jackie's reflection on her time at Hands On Hartford on our website.

### Faith In Action

**The Unitarian Society of Hartford (USH)** invited HOH's Kate Shafer to join them for services and to share information about HOH's programs. The Unitarian Society's "**Good Neighbor Offering**" was dedicated to Hands On Hartford. Kate was also delighted to present a commemorative plaque honoring USH as they were one of the founding congregations of Center City Churches (HOH's former name) – Kate is shown here with **Peter Meny**. The delivery of this plaque, marking HOH's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, was delayed mainly due to COVID-19, but it's now home where it belongs. We are looking forward to inviting our USH friends to visit and volunteer here at Hands On Hartford and continuing our long and valued partnership.



We are so grateful **Vox Church** joined us at Colt Park to paint picnic tables and trash cans, clean up litter and more! Our friends from Vox Church are always there to help - visiting with supportive housing tenants, making food donations for the pantry and more. We see their faith in action in so many ways as they support the Hartford community. We appreciate everyone's hard work in helping maintain Colt Park as the treasure it is to our Hartford neighbors.



## FOODIE DEMO DAY 2022

Congratulations to those of our HOH Shared Kitchen members who graduated from the 2022 Food Incubator program and participated recently in the **"Foodie Demo Day 2022"**, hosted by **ReSET** (Social Enterprise Trust), in conjunction with HOH and partially funded by a CDBG grant. **BIG CONGRATS** goes to HOH Shared Kitchen Member **Gigi Lawrence, of RastaRant**, for winning the **Pitch contest** with her vegan Caribbean-style food!

## New Staff Spotlight



**Karl Robinson,**  
*Chef/Food Service Coordinator*

Karl joins us in the Hands On Hartford kitchen, bringing his cooking skills and his calm and generous spirit to the team. As we move from our traditional Community Meals program to the new Gather55, we are so glad to have him behind the scenes keeping the kitchen humming. Welcome, Karl!



**Julianne Alice,**  
*Café Associate*

If you stop by for a meal at Gather55 Monday through Thursday, you'll see Julianne behind the counter, taking orders and greeting everyone with a big smile - or you'll see her visiting with customers, delivering meals to diners and leading volunteers with efficiency and good cheer. We're so glad to have her join the team!



**Doug Sacks,**  
*Grant Writer/Coordinator*

Doug brings a wealth of grant-writing experience as he joins the Development Team to assist in rounding up the support that's needed to keep all of our programs and services running strong. Level-headed, good-humored and, of course, a great writer, Doug lends a wonderful energy and skill set to the Hands On Hartford team.



## Special Thanks for Gifts and More

We were so surprised to receive 2 HUGE non-perishable food donations totaling **2,085 lbs** from US Post Office customers in response the **"Stamp Out Hunger"** food drive! Thank you **Gladys from the West Hartford Post Office** and also **First Church in Glastonbury** for directing donations to HOH from the **Glastonbury Post Office**.

Residents were asked to donate food by leaving it in their mailbox/porch and carriers picked it up as they delivered the mail, which must have been a great workout! Truly a team effort and a reflection of community coming together to **STAMP OUT HUNGER!** Thank you all!



Meet **Connor**, one of our newest donors with so much passion for helping the community! Connor is a student at the **Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy** (HMTCA) and was recently inspired to lead a food and toiletry drive to support our Hartford community because he says his *"school family has a deep commitment to supporting those underserved and in need. I value my educational experience, learned by being a student in a city with such disparities."* When asked why he chose to donate to HOH he said, *"I did research on organizations in Hartford and appreciated the partnerships and cross-support Hands On Hartford provides to those most in need...this organization gave me the greatest sense that those they supported and helped, received assistance while feeling valued and not less than."* With contributions from various faculty, staff and fellow students, Connor collected over **216lbs of food plus dozens of toiletry items!** To our delight, Connor relayed to us that though this is his first donation drive for us, it will not be his last.



Thank you to the **Hartford Gay Men's Chorus** for hosting their annual **"Provide with Pride" Food Drive** to benefit both our community food pantry and the Chrysalis Center! We're so grateful for their support! We also wish them heartfelt congratulations on celebrating their 10 year anniversary as a chorus!





We were fortunate to work together again with one of our valued partners, **Berkshire Bank**. Over 50 of their staff joined us at **Keney Park Sustainability Project** where they heard from the **Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau**, followed by helping to clean up some of the park's trails, along with putting together outreach kits. We are so thankful for the passion Berkshire has towards helping its community!

What a great visit we had with our friends from **Aetna / CVS Health** earlier this month! They toured our Center for Community, heard from **Ralph Galgiardo of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau**, and donated and assembled Juneteenth gift bags for guests who joined us for a celebratory Juneteenth meal. We are so very grateful for this connection and all the support they have provided us over the years!



Thank you to our friends at **Webster Bank's Bishops Corner branch**, for being SO WONDERFUL in hosting a food drive for our pantry!

We just adore the bright colors and creative "**All Hands On Deck**" theme to spark interest by their staff and customers

**Hands & Hearts Together** is just three months away - September 29! Save the date.

We are delighted to share the news that **PeoplesBank** (shown at right) is a **Sapphire Sponsor** of the event. Their support will ensure that ALL of our Hartford neighbors have a place at the table and we are so grateful for their partnership and investment in this community. And not only that, they are also sponsoring this coming December's Toy Shoppe Holiday Celebration







**Jasper** from **Hartford Healthcare** is a true superstar! Not only did he coordinate a food drive through Hartford Healthcare and collect over 160 lbs of food and hygiene products, but he came on his birthday with all of the donations!

Happy Birthday to Jasper!

## Rosemary Rainey wins Carol Walter Housing Tenant Award!

We are delighted to share that at the Partnership for Strong Communities' recent 2022 Reaching Home Awards Ceremony, our own **Rosemary Rainey** received the **Carol Walter Housing Tenant Award**! Rosemary is a role model and mentor to many in our community and a passionate and inspiring member of the **Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau**. We can't think of anyone who deserves this recognition more and we all feel lucky to work with her.



## Hands On Hartford's got PRIDE!

Happy **PRIDE** month!

Did you know that there are over 20 different pride flags to represent the diversity of identities within the LGBTQIA+ community?

Staff learned this, and a number of other educational facts, at our in-house event to honor LGBTQIA+ Pride Month, hosted earlier this month by our engaging Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

The afternoon was filled with music by LGBTQIA+ artists and trivia to learn about queer history and culture. The DEI committee also presented creative display boards highlighting key historical moments, recommendations for LGBTQIA+ books, movies, and podcasts, and other educational content!



"I believe that telling our stories, first to ourselves and then to one another and the world, is a revolutionary act. It is an act that can be met with hostility, exclusion and violence. It can also lead to love, understanding, transcendence and community." — Janet Mock

We at Hands On Hartford honor PRIDE month and support all who identify with the LGBTQIA+ community.

## About Hands On Hartford

Hands On Hartford, in partnership with others, strengthens community in Hartford by responding faithfully to people in need through programs that change lives and renew human possibility.

We are committed to increasing food security and nutrition, improving health and providing housing while we engage volunteers and connect communities.



## How Can I Help?

**Go shopping!** If you're an online Amazon shopper, be sure to start your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Hands On Hartford as your charity. That way .5% of eligible purchases will automatically go to Hands On Hartford. **Make a donation!** You will be part of a network of donors, volunteers and staff who work together to provide food, housing and related services for families who are struggling to make ends meet. To make a financial donation, visit our website at [www.handsonhartford.org](http://www.handsonhartford.org) and click "Make a Donation Now," or mail your check to Hands On Hartford, 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106.

Or contact Kate Shafer at [kshafer@handsonhartford.org](mailto:kshafer@handsonhartford.org) for more in-kind donation ideas.

**Request a matching donation from your employer!** Many employers will match all or part of your donation - a great way to double your impact.

**Leave a legacy.** Ensure your long term impact on this community by including us in your estate plan, making qualified charitable distributions from your IRA, gifts of appreciated stock, or include us as a contingent beneficiary of your life insurance. Contact Executive Director Barbara Shaw to explore planned giving ideas and to join our Legacy Society. [bshaw@handsonhartford.org](mailto:bshaw@handsonhartford.org) or 860- 706-1502.

***We are grateful for our community and the love, caring, compassion and support we see every day.***



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